

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1.-17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) A chemically synthesized double stranded nucleic acid molecule, wherein:

- a. the double stranded nucleic acid comprises a first strand and a second strand;
- b. the first strand comprises a sense region and the second strand comprises an antisense region;
- c. each strand is about 18 to about 27 nucleotides in length, about 18 to about 23 nucleotides of each strand are complementary to each other, and at least ~~49~~ 18 nucleotides of the second strand are complementary to a target RNA sequence; and
- d. the first strand includes a terminal cap moiety at the 5'-end and the 3'-end of said first strand, and the second strand includes a terminal cap moiety at the 3'-end of said second strand, wherein said 3'-end terminal cap moiety is independently selected from the group consisting of 4',5'-methylene nucleotide; 1-(beta-D-erythrofuranosyl) nucleotide; ~~4'-thio nucleotide~~; 1,5-anhydrohexitol nucleotide; L-nucleotides; *threo*-pentofuranosyl nucleotide; acyclic 3',4'-seco nucleotide; acyclic 3,4-dihydroxybutyl nucleotide; acyclic 3,5-dihydroxypentyl nucleotide, 3'-3'-inverted nucleotide moiety; 3'-3'-inverted abasic moiety; 3'-2'-inverted nucleotide moiety; 3'-2'-inverted abasic moiety; and said 5'-end cap moiety is selected from the group consisting of 4',5'-methylene nucleotide; 1-(beta-D-erythrofuranosyl) nucleotide; ~~4'-thio nucleotide~~; 1,5-anhydrohexitol nucleotide; L-nucleotide; LNA; *threo*-pentofuranosyl nucleotide; acyclic 3',4'-seco nucleotide; 3,4-dihydroxybutyl nucleotide; 3,5-dihydroxypentyl nucleotide, 5'-5'-inverted nucleotide moiety; and 5'-5'-inverted abasic moiety.

19. (Currently Amended) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein said double stranded nucleic acid molecule comprises no ribonucleotides.

20. (Currently Amended) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein said double stranded nucleic acid molecule comprises one or more ribonucleotides.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (Canceled)

25. (Canceled)

26. (Canceled)

27. (Canceled)

28. (Canceled)

29. (Canceled)

30. (Canceled)

31. (Canceled)

32. (Canceled)

33. (Currently Amended) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein one or more pyrimidine nucleotides present in the sense ~~region~~ strand are 2'-O-methyl pyrimidine nucleotides.

34. (Currently Amended) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein one or more purine nucleotides present in the sense ~~region~~ strand are 2'-deoxy purine nucleotides.

35. (Currently Amended) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein one or more pyrimidine nucleotides present in the sense ~~region~~ strand are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro

pyrimidine nucleotides.

36. (Currently Amended) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein one or more pyrimidine nucleotides ~~of present in~~ said antisense ~~region strand~~ are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro pyrimidine nucleotides

37. (Currently Amended) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein one or more purine nucleotides ~~of present in~~ said antisense ~~region strand~~ are 2'-O-methyl purine nucleotides.

38. (Currently Amended) A ~~pharmaceutical~~ composition comprising the double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18 in ~~an~~ a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.